

Farm Labor

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December Work Force During Survey Week Smallest on Record

The Nation's farm labor force for the week of December 24-30 totaled 3,740,000 persons. This was 6 percent fewer workers than for the same period a year earlier. With the Christmas holidays falling during the survey week, the number of workers was at a record low for any monthly survey week. This also represented a decline of 18 percent from the Thanksgiving week, a month earlier.

The family work force consists of working farm operators and unpaid family members. The total number of family workers was 3,054,000 persons, 5 percent below the same period in 1966. Hired workers declined seasonally, with 686,000 workers employed. This was 9 percent below the 1966 survey week and only two-thirds the size of the hired force during the November 1967 survey week.

The 1967 annual average of 4,935,000 farm workers was 5 percent below 1966 and 23 percent below the 1961-65 average. Family workers for 1967 averaged 3,679,000 persons - 22 percent below the 5-year average. The hired force, averaging 1,256,000 workers in 1967, was about three-fourths of the 1961-65 average. These declines reflect the increasing use of mechanical harvesters and other labor-saving devices to make more efficient use of labor on farms.

Christmas Festivities Shorten Work Week

Farm workers on reporting farms worked an average of 33.8 hours during the December survey week. This was a decline of 3.2 hours from a month earlier. Farm operators, with an average of 34.9 hours, worked 6.4 hours less than during the November survey week. Other family members averaged 29.2 hours while hired workers averaged 34.7 hours of farm work.

Farm Wage Rates Advance 9 Percent During 1967

The 1967 annual composite hourly rate, reflecting cash payments for all hiring arrangements, averaged \$1.12, an increase of 9 percent over 1966. The 1967 increase represents the largest annual advance since 1951, when an advance of 11 percent over 1950 was recorded. The rate per hour without board or room averaged \$1.33 in 1967, an increase of 8 percent over the previous year. Wage rates for the weekly hiring arrangements showed advances of 9 percent and monthly rates were up 8 percent from 1966. The annual average wage rates for 1966 and 1967 are shown by States and regions on pages 9 and 10.

The January 1, 1968 composite hourly rate, at \$1.24, was up 9 percent from January 1967. All reported rates are from the Department's crop and livestock reporters and represent rates paid in their localities or on their farms. These rates represent cash payments only with no allowances for values of housing, food, or other items furnished in addition to cash wages.

Limited Farm Work Because of Holidays

The worst cold wave of the season spread over the central and eastern United States during the Christmas holidays. Heavy snow fell from Ohio to North Carolina and northeastward to Maine. The northern and central Rocky Mountains received moderate to heavy snow during the latter part of the week. Lighter snows fell from the Plains to the Great Lakes.

Below normal temperatures and limited precipitation allowed some progress of corn harvest in the eastern Corn Belt. Harvest in other States is complete or in the windup stage. Completion of soybean harvest in several Corn Belt and Southeastern States was delayed by wet field conditions.

Cotton harvest continues to lag in the Southeast because of cold, wet weather. Harvest in Texas, California, New Mexico, and Nevada neared completion. Arizona's harvest continued as weather permitted.

Citrus harvest in California was slowed by cold weather and wet ground. Harvest continued in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and in Florida. Pruning of fruit trees and orchard cleanup continued in many areas.

Seasonal harvest of vegetables continues in California. Lettuce harvest was in full swing in the Yuma area of Arizona, and made good progress in the Salt River Valley. Light volume harvest of cabbage and lettuce in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, while planting of potatoes and watermelons was underway. In the Winter Garden, San Antonio area, harvest of vegetable crops and transplanting of onions continued active. Tender vegetable harvest was confined primarily to the southern peninsula of Florida, while harvest of hardy vegetables was widespread. Planting of vegetables was active in most areas, including spring potatoes in the Hastings area.

Farm employment and indexes, December 1967, with comparisons, United States

	: Annual : average : 1961-65 1/	: Annual : average : 1966 1/	: December : average : 1961-65 1/	: December : 18-24, : 1966	: December : 24-30, : 1967
FARM EMPLOYMENT					
(Thousands)					
Total	6,372	5,214	4,652	3,974	3740
Family labor	4,655	3,854	3,825	3,217	3054
Hired labor	1,717	1,360	827	757	686
INDEXES 2/					
(1910-14=100)					
Total	47	38	46	39	37
Family labor	46	38	45	38	36
Hired labor	51	40	47	43	39
(1957-59=100)					
Total	85	70	83	71	67
Family labor	84	70	84	71	67
Hired labor	88	69	82	75	68

1/ Employment during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.

2/ Monthly indexes are adjusted for seasonal variation.

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Farm Wage Rates and Indexes, January 1, 1968, United States

	: Annual : average : 1967	: January : average : 1962-66	: January : 1967	: January 1, : 1968
FARM WAGE RATES				
Composite rate per hour 1/	\$ 1.12	\$ 0.982	\$ 1.14	\$ 1.24
Per month with house	262	213	249	269
Per month with board and room ..	200	166	193	209
Per week with board and room ..	47.50	37.50	44.00	47.75
Per week without board or room..	60.50	49.00	55.50	60.50
Per day with house	7.50	6.00	7.20	8.10
Per day with board and room ...	8.60	6.90	8.00	8.70
Per day without board or room ..	8.90	7.10	8.40	9.30
Per hour with house	1.18	9.10	1.04	1.15
Per hour without board or room..	1.33	1.16	1.33	1.42
INDEXES 2/				
(1910-14=100)	862	687	799	870
(1957-59=100) ^	148	118	137	150

1/ Weighted average of all rates on a per hour basis.

2/ Indexes are adjusted for seasonal variation.

Farm Work: Weekly Hours Worked Per Worker

State and division	Average for reporting farms - week of December 24-30, 1967				
	Farm Operators	Other Family Members ^{1/}	All Family ^{1/}	Hired Workers	All Workers ^{1/}
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
Maine	51.8	33.9	46.6	32.3	42.0
N.H.	52.2	33.4	47.0	38.6	43.7
Vt.	61.2	41.0	54.1	44.6	50.8
Mass.	57.2	33.9	51.5	42.0	47.5
R.I.	38.6	37.0	38.2	43.0	39.7
Conn.	50.7	34.1	47.2	38.3	44.3
N.Eng.	54.5	35.5	49.1	39.2	45.7
N.Y.	51.5	32.6	45.8	39.8	43.9
N.J.	37.7	33.0	36.8	36.4	36.7
Pa.	46.6	29.7	41.2	35.7	40.1
M.Atl.	48.1	31.1	42.9	38.0	41.6
Ohio	38.7	30.0	36.5	27.7	34.9
Ind.	34.4	28.8	33.3	25.2	31.8
Ill.	33.7	31.6	33.2	32.1	33.1
Mich.	45.4	32.2	41.5	33.2	39.9
Wis.	55.2	30.0	45.9	41.5	45.2
E.N.Cent.	41.2	30.5	37.9	32.7	37.3
Minn.	40.7	28.1	36.9	32.4	36.4
Iowa	41.5	29.2	38.2	35.9	37.9
Mo.	33.5	29.7	32.9	27.0	31.8
N.Dak.	28.5	31.6	29.2	36.7	30.0
S.Dak.	38.1	28.5	35.5	29.8	34.9
Nebr.	36.9	29.5	34.9	23.3	33.7
Kans.	35.0	29.3	33.7	32.6	33.5
W.N.Cent.	37.1	29.3	35.1	31.0	34.7
Del.	31.7	29.0	31.1	24.6	29.5
Md.	36.4	29.2	34.1	39.3	35.3
Va.	32.9	28.4	32.0	30.5	31.5
W.Va.	32.8	27.3	31.4	25.0	30.3
N.C.	27.7	27.7	27.7	28.2	27.8
S.C.	29.2	24.9	28.3	25.0	27.0
Ga.	28.7	29.2	28.8	25.7	27.8
Fla.	35.9	31.8	34.9	39.4	38.1
S.Atl.	30.3	28.1	29.7	35.1	31.1
Ky.	31.0	31.0	31.0	26.5	29.6
Tenn.	24.2	28.0	24.8	22.0	24.2
Ala.	24.7	23.8	24.6	24.6	24.6
Miss.	29.9	25.4	32.3	24.5	28.4
E.S.Cent.	27.5	27.5	28.1	24.4	26.8
Ark.	24.6	29.3	25.4	27.0	25.8
La.	24.4	27.6	24.9	28.1	25.9
Okla.	31.2	27.2	30.3	26.2	29.7
Texas	34.0	29.1	32.9	30.7	32.2
W.S.Cent.	30.4	28.5	29.9	29.3	29.6
Mont.	31.3	33.9	31.9	41.8	33.7
Idaho	34.3	28.6	32.9	35.6	33.4
Wyo.	42.3	29.3	38.6	37.9	38.4
Colo.	34.4	26.8	32.3	31.0	32.0
N.Mex.	31.8	24.0	29.7	37.6	32.2
Ariz.	33.1	29.7	32.3	35.9	34.2
Utah	28.3	26.8	27.9	29.1	28.1
Nev.	37.4	40.3	38.0	42.9	40.4
Mount.	33.3	28.9	32.1	35.8	33.1
Wash.	27.8	26.5	27.6	25.5	26.9
Oreg.	33.5	31.6	33.1	28.0	31.9
Calif.	36.8	34.8	36.4	43.2	41.5
Pac.	33.4	31.7	33.1	40.9	37.6
U.S.	34.9	29.2	33.4	34.7	33.8

^{1/} Includes as "other family" only those farm household members working 15 hours or more per week without receiving cash wages.

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